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INDONESIA

Indonesia Paving its Own *Sesame Street*

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Children in Indonesia will soon be learning to read and to count with some of the most colorful characters on television. With funding from USAID through President Bush's Indonesia Education Initiative, the non-profit educational organization Sesame Workshop and Creative Indigo Production, a cutting edge Jakarta-based company, are bringing an Indonesian co-production of *Sesame Street* to the region. With three seasons of an original series, a total of 156 half-hour episodes, viewers will see newly created Indonesian Muppet characters, locally produced live action and animation films, and classic *Sesame Street* segments featuring Elmo, Cookie Monster and the rest of the *Sesame* friends. The still unnamed series will debut in 2007.

Sesame Workshop has already begun pre-production for series. To ensure the relevance and educational value of the series, a local curriculum development specialist has been retained to work with a panel of experts in early childhood education and other specialties in Indonesia to create a plan that is relevant and age appropriate. The advisors from throughout the country gathered in Jakarta recently for a two-day meeting to discuss Indonesian children's developmental needs and the way a *Sesame Street* project might help address them.

In addition to teaching basic cognitive skills such as literacy and math, the series will represent the vibrant diversity of Indonesia's vast archipelago, an area rich in culture, tradition, language and the arts. The series will celebrate the similarities and differences that are part of children's everyday lives and present a locally produced program with global relevance.

Other training and exchange will take place for *Sesame Street* in Indonesia, including a two-week workshop in New York to begin creating the series' characters and set. The creative and content team will together further develop the series back home in Jakarta.

Additional workshops with the series' writers and puppeteers will be offered in Jakarta to hone their already extensive skills.

USAID and the Sesame Workshop have successfully worked together on other *Sesame Street* co-productions including those in South Africa, Egypt, Russia, Bangladesh, and India. The new Indonesian co-production is one of the largest partnerships between USAID and the Workshop to date.